DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 420 CG 010 730

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TITLE Disruptive Behavior: Prevention and Control.
INSTITUTION National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 13p.
AVAILABLE FROM Research Department, National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091 (HC $0.50, payment must accompany orders of $10.00 or less, quantity discounts available)
JOURNAL CIT The Practitioner: A Newsletter for the On-Line Administrator; n2 Entire Issue Apr 1976

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; *Delinquency Causes; *Delinquency Prevention; Delinquent Identification; Delinquent Rehabilitation; Newsletters; Program Descriptions; Research Projects; *School Vandalism; Secondary Education; *Student Alienation; *Student School Relationship

ABSTRACT

Delinquency and vandalism are serious problems in secondary schools today. These problems, coupled with the fear of retaliation and the complications of the present legal system, are examined for causes and possible solutions in this newsletter article. Some causes of this delinquency are listed as: (1) alienation from society due to economic difficulties; (2) prolonged adolescent dependence; (3) large schools; and (4) the effect of television violence. The article further delineates a profile of a typical delinquent youth with reference to age, sex, family background, SES, education, work, social behavior, attitudes, and future plans. Possible solutions designed to help delinquent students are: (1) alternative educational settings; (2) career exploration and vocational training; (3) more significant and effective punishment of offenders; (4) written codes defining appropriate student behavior; (5) early detection of delinquency through truancy rates; and (6) greater parental involvement. The article lists 11 classifications of programs and provides 16 examples of actual delinquency prevention and rehabilitation programs together with contact persons and addresses. (HLM)

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The Practitioner

A Newsletter for the On-Line Administrator

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Vol. 2, No. 2 April 1976

Disruptive Behavior: Prevention and Control

A Trend

Secondary schools today are caught in an escalation of student misbehavior unmatched in history. The situation has become serious enough to disrupt the learning in many schools. Educationally, the cost to students of this intrusion is incalculable. The economic costs, however, are known. They run a staggering $12 billion dollars annually.1 An immediate response to the situation urgently is needed to stop this hemorrhage of school resources.

A Widespread Problem

The incidence of serious delinquency committed in schools continues to rise. While urban schools are especially susceptible to attack, suburban and rural systems certainly are not immune. During the past five years robberies and burglaries in secondary schools nationwide have jumped nearly 50 percent, while assaults on teachers have risen 73 percent, and those on students a phenomenal 85 percent. Some 70,000 physical assaults on teachers now are reported annually, touching 3 percent of the nation's teaching staff.

The cost of school vandalism alone reaches $500 million annually, comparable to the total sum spent on textbooks each year throughout the nation! Schools are forced into shortchanging the serious student by spending millions of dollars on security devices and guard services. Special programs for disruptive and nonadjusting youth add to the cost burden as well. Regretfully, these monies are bled from the educational programs of operating schools, therefore allowing fewer resources for classroom learning.

Perhaps most damaging of all, however, is the "tone" of mistrust and suspicion that develops when a school is invaded by threats and extortions. The morale of students, teachers, and even parents falls appreciably. Meanwhile, the principal's frustration grows because corralling student crime takes time away from more significant tasks of school leadership.

1 U.S. Government. *Our Nation's Schools—A Report Card: "A" in School Violence and Vandalism*, Senate Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Washington, D.C., 1975.

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Mysteries and Hurdles

Yet much school crime remains hidden. A tendency exists among students and teachers (and even some administrators) to not report serious incidents. Students and teachers may fear retaliation or dislike being tabbed an informer. Teachers, as well, tire of taking the risk to report violations then seeing little concrete result coming of this risk. Some principals may feel that too many reports of misbehavior will damage the reputation of the school.

Legal hurdles may obstruct the effective investigation and adjudication of various offenses. The accused often receive generous assistance from legal aid offices. Thus, many times the accused wins by attrition through repeated continuances and other legal maneuvering.

Some Causes

Sociologists and psychologists continue to seek answers to the problem of increasing juvenile misbehavior in American society. Certainly, youth crime is much larger than the schools. The majority of youth crime is committed on the streets. Also, about 25 percent of "school crime" nationwide is committed by non-school intruders. Principals, teachers, parents, and students all feel the impact upon the school of socially maladjusted youth.

Close examination reveals certain basic causes of hostile youth, to include urbanization and economic disparity. These factors lie deep in the framework of society as does racial mistrust. Other causes of note include dramatic changes in family life, personal values, and social relationships.

Alienation from society often starts with economic difficulties. Poor people may develop a sense of personal worthlessness and become alienated from society. This is expressed, especially by youth as antisocial behavior. Other causes include "rising expectations," the gap between what society teaches can be expected as a mainstream American citizen and what actually is achieved in life.

Prolonged adolescent dependence also causes disruptive students. Older youth today remain in an adolescent state even though they possess the talents and energies to assume adult responsibilities. They have little chance to contribute or "earn their independence" from adults. Because young persons have little chance to assume any serious responsibilities, their need for independence is fulfilled by confrontation with adults and authority symbols. In recognition of this need, adults are providing opportunities for young people to participate in the larger society and to contribute to its welfare.

Another major problem is simply that many schools may have become too large. Administrators find it difficult to maintain personal contact with staff and students in large schools. Conversely, students and staff can develop a sense of separation and powerlessness. When persons lose their identity in schools (or in any institution), the result is increased antisocial behavior. Thus, large schools probably are programmed, in part, for a certain level of student antipathy.

A large high school may have functioned well when students lived in a stable home and familiar neighborhood. But in a transient and anonymous world, one also characterized by loose family ties, youth need at least one familiar institution. The smaller school, with its personal friendships and its opportunities to participate, is one of the few places open for youth to become known, to be somebody, and to become appreciated as a person.

The incidence of violence on television entertainment programs is coming under increasing criticism. In a new study of television, volunteer men were shown five kinds of programming ranging from those high in violence to those high in "prosocial behavior." Wives, asked to report behavior, discovered that husbands who watched prosocial programs demonstrated a general decline in aggressive mood throughout the week, while husbands who watched programs of high violence reflected an aggressive level. Thus, the investigator concludes, "that violence on television is a serious social issue for those concerned about adult behavior . . . as it is for those concerned with child behavior."[2] This study and others indicate that if guidelines on violence were developed by the Federal Communications Commission, the aggression found in homes and on the streets may diminish.

The search for definitive explanations about the current rise in antisocial attitudes will continue. Specific answers likely will come along slowly. At present, our knowledge about the nature of disruptive youth can best be summarized by this profile:

Profile of Typical Delinquent Youth

I.	Sex	Male
II.	Age	12-17
III.	Family	Single parent home; usually lives with working mother; several children in family.
IV.	Socioeconomic	Parents born in the city; grandparents migrated from rural area. Family income at poverty level, often on welfare.
V.	Environment	Family does not own home; rather, lives in apartment or public housing; marginal living conditions; few comforts.
VI.	Education	One or two years behind class; difficulty with reading; frequently absent; often tardy; nonparticipant in school activities; admires sports, but generally does not participate; concerned with lack of autonomy allowed in school.
VII.	Work	Works part time or on pickup jobs; often does not stay long in the same job.
VIII.	Social Habits	Advanced socially; sexually mature; sets own hours, drinks moderately, smokes cigarettes; uses drugs periodically; generally does not own a car.
IX.	Attitude	Surly; antagonistic; vacillates with periods of reclusiveness.
X.	Future	No long-range goals; no plans for postsecondary education; job oriented; some interest in vocational-technical education.

2 Loye, David. "Television—For Love or Violence?" *Human Behavior*, March 1976.

Administrators Seek Solutions

Procedures for handling disruptive students focus upon two central approaches: (1) assignment to supportive, corrective programs; and (2) suspension and/or expulsion of violators. Most administrators agree that suspensions are no more than necessary stopgap measures. Schools constantly search for other alternatives to curb misbehaving youth. (A potentially effective deterrent, fines levied for violations, is ordinarily not allowed.) Schools, alone, cannot change a society that spawns deviant behavior patterns. They can, however, restructure their own limited environment to offer clear policies, improved programs, and stronger security. A positive answer for disruptive youth is to provide alternative educational settings, places that respond to the unique needs of these youth. This approach usually includes a comprehensive counseling service and new opportunities to improve reading and math skills.

Efforts to reshape the instructional program can pay dividends. Opportunities should be expanded for career exploration and vocational training. Community-based education programs—"action learning" opportunities—are needed to bring students closer to the adult community. In addition, young people should have the option of "stopping out" or "stepping out" of school for a period of time with the opportunity to return without penalty or loss of status.

The manner by which a school responds to an offender carries important overtones to all students. Administrators should "make it more difficult to commit an offense, increase the probability that an offender will be caught, enhance the system of handling accused students, and increase the effectiveness of punishments for students found guilty of illegal acts."[3] It appears, however, that schools have limited control, only, over "effective punishments" valued by adolescents such as money, freedom, and employment. The penalties now imposed—suspensions, loss of privileges, and even expulsion—often are not significantly important costs to youth. Thus, schools always need the partnership of the community and the use of community resources for learning as part of the treatment package.

Written regulations defining student behavior are necessary. They clarify the ground rules, help the teachers employ appropriate procedures in their classrooms and on campus, and they provide students with a guide to the school's expectations about student rights and responsibilities. Written codes are also necessary because courts expect specific rules and procedures when reviewing discipline cases.

Research suggests a strong association between delinquency and truancy. Because truancy surfaces in the elementary grades, it can be a handy barometer to identify students having trouble adapting to school. This can lead to disruptive action later in school life. No one should assume, however, that "a truant student is always a delinquent student."

Parents need to be reinvolved with their sons and daughters. Schools should encourage parents to be more active in planning the educational program and school activities of their students. By this process parents become again interested and responsible for the actions of their offspring. Parents cannot solely depend upon penalties given by teachers and principals for serious offenses. Parents should support necessary legal action and be financially liable for damages caused by their students.[4]

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3 McPartland, James M., and Edward L. McDill, *High School Rules and Decision Making Procedures as Sources of School Stability*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, February 1974.

4 Kinnel, Mrs. Walter; President of the National PTA. *Testimony* before Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Wednesday, September 17, 1975, Washington, D.C.

Class size is an important ingredient in disruptions. When the teacher has over thirty students in a class, then an inordinate amount of time is spent on maintaining control and correspondingly less on instruction.[5]

On Balance

In summary, it must be reiterated that the causes of school disruption are multiple, as are their solutions. The problem is best viewed as a giant and delicate balance scale, with a series of weights on both sides of this scale. As negative elements are added to one side, new elements for positive behavior must be placed on the other to redress the imbalance. Currently, the scales appear to be tipped toward problems and away from solutions. To redress this balance, the larger society, the local community, and the school must work closely and vigorously together to remove the negatives from the scale while at the same time adding the weight of preventative and rehabilitative positives.

Looking Toward Solutions

Many schools have mounted programs to counsel, to redirect, and to control disruptive youth. Examples of some of these programs are described here. The variety of approaches illustrated in this section provides impressive evidence of the imagination and ingenuity of schools as they attempt to overcome disruption and vandalism.

Generally, the programs aimed at reeducating and controlling disruptive youth fall into eleven general classifications, as follows:

Alternative Programs
Behavior Modification
Communications Network
Counseling Groups
Financial Incentives
Honor Passes and Awards
Minicourses
Monitors and Safety Committees
Peer Counseling
Police Liaison Programs
Special Reports

These programs represent, in the main, only one of a number of initiatives for student welfare and control in a school. They should be considered as part of a school's policy and as not the entire program.

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5 McPartland and McDill, *op. cit.*

To Illustrate

East Baton Rouge Parish School District
Post Office Box 2950, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821
Robert J. Aertker, Superintendent

The East Baton Rouge Parish policy on discipline includes the use of a behavior clinic based on the concept of positive intervention. Students are assigned to the clinic for minor offenses such as disobedience, class cutting, smoking, gambling, etc. Assignment is made for as many as six clinic sessions for a single offense. Repeated offenders, as well as students committing major offenses, are suspended rather than enrolled in the clinic.

The clinic is conducted after school for a period of approximately one hour and forty-five minutes. Parents are informed of a student's assignment to the clinic. Students may attend clinic for up to four minor offenses. Suspension starts with the fifth offense.

The students assigned to the clinic receive individual and group lessons and counseling. The activities concern personal values, interpersonal relationships, feelings toward family and parents, and a student's feelings about his own worth in the school and community.

Blue Springs R-IV School District
1801 West Vesper, Blue Springs, Missouri 64015
Nelson Hanmann, Educational Center Counselor

Blue Springs operates a program to provide "disordered adolescents" between the ages of sixteen and twenty and who have dropped out of school with programs leading to a high school diploma. Other goals include a reduction of "acting out" behavior and the acceptance of responsibility by these youth.

Each student selected must have dropped out the previous year and must meet the criteria established for "behavior disordered" youth. These criteria are: (1) difficulty in learning that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or other health factors; (2) difficulty in building or maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers, parents, and teachers; (3) a general mood of unhappiness or depression; (4) a tendency to develop physical symptoms, pains, or fears associated with personal/social problems. Students are provided with both individual and group counseling designed to give the student a feeling of self-worth and of meaningful personal relationships.

Requirements for the high school diploma are the same as for the mainstream school, but approaches to learning differ. Learning is individualized for each student with a particular emphasis on identifying strengths and improving weaknesses. Out-of-class work is twice that of in-class work.

Ponce de Leon Junior High School
5801 Augusto Street, Coral Gables, Florida 33146
Ralph V. Moore, Jr., Principal

Ponce de Leon Junior High School operates a Student Adjustment Center (SAC) for students who are disruptive in school. The rationale for SAC is: (1) to keep students in the "regular" program, (2) prevent disruptive behavior, and (3) provide an alternative to suspension.

Students are assigned to SAC for an unspecified amount of time, although teachers may request a minimum length of time. Release from SAC depends upon student progress. Students work primarily on basic skills in math and reading. Appropriate class assignments can be given by teachers, as well. SAC personnel incorporate behavioral tutoring. Students must use facilities such as rest rooms, cafeteria, etc. under the direct supervision of the SAC staff and at times other than regular passing periods.

Key elements of this program include the continuous counseling of students, the cooperation and involvement of the parents, and the involvement of the community. A strong liaison exists with the local vocational rehabilitation services.

Goals of the program include (1) improvement of attitudes about work, school, and society; (2) improvement of personal appearance and hygiene; (3) development of realistic understanding of the connection between work and study; (4) development of personality characteristics of dignity, self-respect, self-reliance, perseverance, initiative, and resourcefulness; (5) the receiving of recognition; and (6) achievement in the school's educational program.

Roanoke City Public Schools
917 South Jefferson Street, Roanoke, Virginia 24012
M. D. Pack, Superintendent

The Roanoke City Public Schools have established an alternative education center to provide a different setting for students experiencing difficulty in the city schools. This center highlights the importance of continuing education regardless of the social and/or academic status of the students. It provides a positive atmosphere that develops intellectual independence, self-esteem, and community awareness; that incorporates realistic evaluation sessions for each student, and that provides individualized instruction to students.

The goals of this program include motivating the students to learn, helping students deal with behavioral problems, helping identify personal responsibilities as members of the community, assisting students in their acquisition of actual job experiences, and helping students to acquire self-confidence and belief in their own ability.

Bound Brook High School
West Union Avenue, Bound Brook, New Jersey 08805
Joseph Donnelly, Principal

Bound Brook High School adopted a cooperative incentive program known as AVIP (Anti-Vandalism Incentive Program) to counter vandalism in the school. The board of education holds in escrow a sum of money equal to $1.00 per student. Costs of repairs and replacement of equipment and fixtures damaged by vandalism are taken from this account. The amount left in the account at the end of the year may be spent by the student body for equipment to be used in the school for their pleasure and comfort, such as a tape deck, additional athletic equipment, color television, air conditioner, etc.

To administer this program an AVIP committee, consisting of one student and one alternate from each class, one board member, two teachers, and the principal, was organized for the purpose of reviewing biweekly reports to determine if damage was due to normal wear and tear or vandalism, or a combination of both. If the review determines that damage was the result of vandalism, the amount of repair or

replacement is subtracted from the amount held in escrow. This figure is relayed to the student body to keep them informed and to sustain interest. The committee is also responsible for publicizing the program and uses a thermometer-type graph in the school cafeteria which shows the initial amount in the account and the amount that remains.

Monroe Junior High School
5105 Bedford Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68104
Robert A. Bathke, Principal

Monroe uses a program called "Positive Peer Culture" which utilizes techniques learned from juvenile correctional programs.

Student leaders, both "positive" and "negative," are identified by the school. These students then are formed into a unified leadership group through an intensive training program. The focus of this training is upon improving the school for all students.

The basic philosophy of PPC is: (a) accept peer influence in a youth subculture as a dominant force; (b) use peer influence in a positive and helping way; (c) no one has the right to harm other people; (d) students must be accountable for their actions; (e) adults alone cannot solve every behavior problem in a school; (f) young people must get involved in helping their peers; (g) staff must care about students, be firm, and set fair limits.

As an outcome of the training program, the positive and negative leaders influence their followership to support policies identified by the leadership group as generally beneficial for the student body. Thus, through the influence of peer leadership, a "positive peer culture" emerges.

Spring Valley High School
Sparkleberry Lane, Columbia, South Carolina 29206
John H. Hudgens, Principal

Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina provides a positive option for problem students with an "alternative to suspension group." A Spring Valley student, at the first or second suspension, has the choice of participating in the group or being suspended from school. Students who elect the group attend sessions for five weeks, one period per week.

Through individual and group counseling, students are helped to understand the reasons their offenses are viewed as offensive and to discover and examine alternatives to unacceptable behavior. In addition, students are encouraged to consider their values, attitudes, and goals. They also are assisted to cope with school adjustment.

Individuals set goals for themselves early in the group process. Goals are revised as clarification and understanding develop. Students are encouraged to discuss honestly and concretely the nature of their troubles. Students also are expected to listen and to assist other group members.

Parkway School District
455 North Woods Mill Road, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017
Murray L. Tiffany, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Parkway schools, in cooperation with the Law Enforcement Assistance Council, have assigned to the district a St. Louis County police officer and a St. Louis Juvenile Court deputy juvenile officer. The deputy juvenile officer's role includes receiving referrals directly from parents, school, court, or police regarding pre-delinquent or delinquent juveniles, counseling delinquent juveniles, assisting families in obtaining help for delinquent children, offering alternative programs for juveniles, developing volunteer foster placements, and making community and class presentations on juvenile law and youth problems.

The policeman's role is to provide general police services to the schools in the district, to be used as a resource person for police information, to give presentations to the community and to classes, upon request, on topics such as laws, drugs, safety programs, etc., utilizing films, discussions, role-playing techniques, and other instructional methods. The officer also is to be available for informal contacts with the students regarding laws or police matters. He is not to act as a security guard or be on patrol duties.

Vacaville High School
100 Monte Vista Avenue, Vacaville, California 95688
William H. Cornelison, Principal

Vacaville High School utilizes a Youth Service Bureau (YSB) program. This Bureau, located in the main high school office, is manned by two youth service police officers with bachelor's degrees in sociology, psychology, and criminal justice. The officers teach two regular classes, giving students a new perspective on law enforcement personnel and their work. They participate also in extracurricular activities as would a regular teacher.

Other duties include serving as liaison between the schools, home referral agencies, and police department. Juveniles are cited to the Youth Service Bureau with the intent that, through counseling, fewer problems will develop.

The benefits offered by this diversion program are significant. Misbehaving youth may continue to live at home while receiving counseling from the Bureau. The youth, in turn, will not have a court record. The Bureau's aim is to correct factors causing offenses to be committed as well as to reinforce the notion that the offense was wrong. Cooperative efforts are mounted with probation departments, family planning agencies, youth corps, and child protection agencies, as well.

Miami Killian Senior High School
10655 S.W. 97th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33156
E. J. Arahill, Principal

Killian Senior High School requires all students to take a minicourse concerning assaults and disruptive behavior. Included in the learning activities package (LAP) for the course are definitions of deviant behavior as well as consequences for the different misbehaviors outlined in the school district's policy. The steps for reporting attacks and assaults are also part of the LAP.

The LAP assures the school that students are sufficiently aware of the nature and the consequences of misbehavior. This guarantees that necessary first steps in due process have been taken.

Hocker Grove Junior High School
10411 Johnson Drive, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66203
William Vick, Principal

Hocker Grove Junior High School uses an honor pass as a reward for positive student behavior. This program promotes in students a feeling of trust and gives students a desire to control themselves.

Each student at the beginning of the year receives an honor pass signed by the principal or assistant principal. This "card of value" says, in effect, that the student operates on his honor when out of class.

Students who misbehave or become disruptive are penalized by points. When twenty points are reached, the honor pass is suspended for a minimum of two weeks. Parents are notified as is the staff. Continued accumulation of points results in increased pass suspensions. Fifty points will result in permanent loss of the pass.

The program relieves some of the clerical duties, such as filling out passes to the rest room or library. It also is an efficient and accountable program for keeping track of and solving minor disciplinary problems.

The honor pass system is designed for the majority of students who are good citizens. The school believes that too often programs are developed for that small percentage of students who are not capable of behaving well without supervision.

Chester W. Nimitz Junior High School
6021 Carmelita Avenue, Huntington Park, California 90255
Roger L. Caukin, Principal

Chester W. Nimitz Junior High School, California, has adopted a Citizenship Honor Society. Pupils who are reliable citizens in cooperation and work habits are so noted on report cards with "E's" (excellent).

Students attaining a given number of "E's" (depending upon the number of courses taken), become members of the Citizenship Honor Society and are eligible to participate in special activities for members such as dances, assemblies, or movies. Pupils receiving all "E's" on a report card will receive recognition via a special certificate presented at the end of each semester.

Manasquan High School
Manasquan, New Jersey 08736
Harry Morris, Principal

Manasquan High School has an early intervention program whereby "high risk" students in grades nine and ten are placed in groups with outstanding eleventh and twelfth graders and two staff members to discuss school life, home situations, and social interactions. This peer group relationship assists these "high risk" students to cope with school and personal life and helps them establish and clarify a value system.

Conard High School
110 Berkshire Road, West Hartford, Connecticut 06107
Douglas G. Christie, Principal

Conard High School employs two adult building monitors to help reduce vandalism and disruption in the school. The monitors were professionally trained by a local security agency. Student acceptance of the role of the monitor is fundamental to the success of the program. To gain acceptance, an advisory committee made up of faculty, students, administrators, and the head custodian was appointed. The committee's responsibility was to interview prospective monitors and discern and formulate their duties. Monitors, after selection, were introduced to the student body and their duties were posted and made known to all.

Some of the duties of the monitors include: (1) patrolling the school building and grounds; (2) checking parking areas and entrances to school; (3) questioning persons on school premises who are not students or staff; (4) checking restrooms, stairwells, hallways, and other areas inside the building; (5) conferring with students regarding improper behavior and attempting to obtain voluntary compliance with school regulations; (6) reporting periodically to principals on problems, incidents, and conditions affecting security.

Neumann Preparatory School
970 Black Oak Ridge Road, Wayne, New Jersey 07470
Reverend John G. Pisarcik, Principal

At Neumann Preparatory School the student council is billed for any deliberate destruction of property by unknown students. The student council is briefed periodically on the school's finances to understand the ways that repair and maintenance reduce funds that could be used for student academics and activities. The council, by exerting peer pressure on the student body, is able to determine responsibility in nearly every case. Students responsible for vandalism are then held accountable and the council is relieved of its fiscal responsibility. The council also can make recommendations about cost cutting.

Stevensville Middle School
Stevensville, Maryland 21666
Ronald W. Hill, Principal

Stevensville Middle School established a system of reports among parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors.

When students begin to get in difficulties, a daily report card is instituted. This provides each teacher with the opportunity to "grade" students for a number of days. It also allows teachers to know about student behavior in other classes. The reports are signed by the school bus driver and the parents on a daily basis, as well.

To provide positive reinforcement, an "excellence report" is given as a reward for outstanding work in a class. Students meeting certain positive criteria, such as being prepared, completing assignments, showing interest, etc., receive these reports at such times during a marking period as the teacher deems appropriate. An "improvement report" also may be sent for students needing encouragement to improve their classroom performance.

These forms can represent more work, but the school believes that documented and frequent reports will improve student behavior and keep serious discipline problems to a minimum.

This *Practitioner* was developed by Bernard Davis, administrative intern, and Scott Thomson, associate secretary for research, of NASSP.

Information for this report comes from a research paper on disruptive youth commissioned by Mr. Andrew W. Mason of the Maryland State Department of Education and prepared by the Research Office of NASSP.

Appreciation is extended to the Maryland State Department of Education and to the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals for their interest in disruptive youth, and for the opportunity to investigate and prepare the larger research study for their use.

The Practitioner is a publication of the Research Department of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091. *The Practitioner* is distributed quarterly without charge to all NASSP members. Additional copies may be ordered: single copies 50c each; 2-10 copies, 30c each; prices for larger quantities on request. **Payment must accompany orders of $10 or less.**

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